

U P I 17 June 1980

RUTLAND, VT.-17 JUNE 1980--THE TWO TOP OFFICERS OF SPACE RESEARCH CORP. MONDAY WERE SENTENCED TO SIX MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR ILLEGALLY EXPORTING WEAPONS AND ARTILLERY TECHNOLOGY TO SOUTH AFRICA. COMPANY FOUNDER GERALD BULL AND PRESIDENT RODGERS GREGORY WERE EACH GIVEN ONE-YEAR SENTENCES BY U.S. DISTRICT COURT CHIEF JAMES HOLDEN, WHO SUSPENDED HALF THE SENTENCES. TWO YEARS WOULD HAVE BEEN THE MAXIMUM SENTENCE. THE TWO EXECUTIVES PLEADED GUILTY TO THE CHARGES THREE MONTHS AGO. HOLDEN ALSO LEVIED FIVE FINES TOTALING \$45,000 AGAINST THE AMERICAN AFFILIATE OF SPACE RESEARCH CORP., AN ARMS MANUFACTURING FIRM THAT STRADLES THE VERMONT AND QUEBEC BORDER. ARMS SHIPMENTS TO SOUTH AFRICA VIOLATE AN EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED NATIONS. THE COMPANY HAD PLEADED GUILTY TO EXPORTING 30,000 HOWITZER SHELLS, TWO GUN BARRELS AND A RADAR TRACKING SYSTEM TO SOUTH AFRICA. THAT CHARGE BROUGHT A \$25,000 FINE. HOLDEN LEVIED A \$5,000 FINE ON EACH OF FOUR OTHER CHARGES AGAINST THE COMPANY, STEMMING FROM ALLEGEDLY FALSE INFORMATION ON SHIPPING DOCUMENTS. LAWYERS FOR THE DEFENDENTS ARGUED THAT BULL AND GREGORY SHOULD BE SPARED A PRISON SENTENCE BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT DANGEROUS TO SOCIETY, BUT HOLDEN REJECTED THAT ARGUMENT, CALLING THE MATTER A "TRAGIC CASE." THE PAIR PLEADED GUILTY TO ONE CHARGE OF ILLEGAL EXPORTS RATHER THAN FACE A POSSIBLE INDICTMENT BY A FEDERAL GRAND JURY THAT HAD PROBED THE FIRM'S ACTIVITIES FOR MORE THAN A YEAR. AS THE SENTENCE WAS BEING ANNOUNCED, MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS MEETING PEACE ACTION COMMITTEE PICKETED OUTSIDE THE COURTHOUSE, SUGGESTING THAT AN INVESTIGATION OF SPACE RESEARCH'S ACTIVITIES SHOULD GO FURTHER THAN BULL AND GREGORY. "SHOULD THE CIA BE INDICTED?" ONE PICKETER'S SIGN READ, "WHAT BULL HIDES BEHIND MR. BULL," READ ANOTHER. COMPANY OFFICIALS HAD REPORTEDLY THREATENED TO CHARGE THE CIA WAS INVOLVED IN THE ARMS DEAL IF THE MATTER WENT TO A TRIAL. THE CIA HAS DENIED THAT CHARGE.